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ABSTRACT

A total of 29 primary school head teachers, advisers, trainers, and specialists in career- and work-related learning met to discuss the role of career-related learning in primary schools in the United Kingdom. The discussion centered on the following topics: potential benefits of career-related learning in primary schools; rationale for, and good practice in, career-related learning in primary schools; and ways of supporting efforts to expand the scope and quality of career-related learning in primary schools. The discussion resulted in a framework of career-related learning outcomes in the following three areas: self-development (help children understand and develop themselves); career exploration (help children identify available career options); and career management (help children make decisions and carry out their plans). The following key issues for curriculum planning and design were identified and explored: concept of career-related learning; teaching and learning approaches; and progression in career-related learning (developing provision, training/staff development). An action agenda was developed that detailed actions for schools and local and national agencies in support of schools to take, with respect to the following aspects of developing career-related learning: enabling; informing and arousing interest; preparing; advising and supporting; implementing; and auditing and evaluating. (MN)

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Career-Related Learning in Primary Schools

Report on a NICEC/CRAC invitational policy consultation held on 26-27 October 1998 at Madingley Hall, Cambridge

sponsored by the Careers and Information Division of the Department for Education and Employment

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NICEC

The National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling is a network organisation sponsored by CRAC. It conducts applied research and development work related to guidance in educational institutions and in work and community settings. Its aim is to develop theory, inform policy and enhance practice through staff development, organisation development, curriculum development, consultancy and research.

CRAC

The Careers Research and Advisory Centre is a registered educational charity and independent development agency founded in 1964. Its education and training programmes, publications and sponsored projects provide links between the worlds of education and employment.

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Career-related learning in primary schools helps children to manage their progress in learning and work. It is part of a wider concern for 'learning for living' which includes personal, social and health education, citizenship, environmental education and work-related learning.

The aims of the consultation were to examine the place of career-related learning in Key Stages 1 and 2, and to make appropriate recommendations for policy and practice. Its objectives were to:

- identify the potential benefits of career-related learning in primary schools;
- develop a rationale for such work;
- review illustrative 'good practice';
- recommend ways in which the scope and quality of work in this area might be extended and supported.

The 29 participants included primary headteachers and those with an interest in developing career-related learning in primary schools, including advisers, trainers and other specialists in career and work-related learning. The consultation was chaired by Tony Watts, Director of NICEC.

This report records the main themes of the debate and the recommendations made. It is written by Anthony Barnes (NICEC Fellow). It does not necessarily represent the views of the consultation sponsors, or of any particular individual at the event.

WHAT IS CAREER-RELATED LEARNING?

"A school is a working community and the child is a worker in that context."

Career-related learning helps children to manage their progress in learning and work. It is more than just preparation for adult working life, although that is an important part of it. Children need opportunities to take responsibility for managing their own work as pupils. Being a pupil is part of their career experience.

Career-related learning helps children to understand and develop themselves. It enables them to think about their present and anticipated future roles in their families, as students, workers, citizens and so on. Its main focus is helping children to understand that they have a career and equipping them with the skills to investigate opportunities, plan purposefully, make choices and decisions and carry them through. They need also to understand that what we mean by 'work' can embrace work in the home, voluntary work and self-employment as well as paid employment. Above all, they need to make the connection between learning and work, as lifelong career development.

The focus and coverage of this definition may surprise those who associate careers work exclusively with secondary schools and feel uncomfortable about applying the language of careers education to primary schools.

The term 'career' may be off-putting initially for some teachers. It is hard to dispel the feeling that careers work in the primary school somehow threatens childhood. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the home corner, for example, children enjoy acting out what grown-ups do, especially when it is transformed into a police station, clinic or travel agents. Career-related learning at this age builds on children's natural curiosity and their existing perceptions of work roles, and seeks to broaden and deepen their experience.

Once teachers have become familiar with what this work entails, they quickly become comfortable with using the term 'career-related learning':

- they find that they are already doing most of what they need to do;
- they realise that it offers solutions to many of their problems, such as how to motivate some children, and how to make children better learners.

SELLING THE BENEFITS

"We need to work on the mind-set that sees careers education and guidance as a sheep-dip activity done to pupils at Key Stage 4 for the benefit of employers."

The most persuasive arguments for career-related learning in the primary school concern the benefits not only for pupils and schools, but also for communities and society, and the economy.

If children are going to trust and value the help of teachers and other interested adults, their needs must come first. We can identify a range of worthwhile outcomes from career-related learning which are useful to children. The next section ("A Framework of Outcomes") illustrates some of the main gains which children can make in their learning and development.

Communities and society benefit from children being aware of the responsibilities and opportunities of adult working life. Career-related learning helps children to think about the social as well as personal value of the work they may choose to do. It also encourages children to value equity and diversity in the workplace. Career-related learning can promote equality of opportunity by opening up to children a broader range of opportunities, and can help the school to monitor and raise pupil aspirations. The potential for career-related learning to motivate children and make their learning more relevant to them is an important contribution to tackling social exclusion. Early intervention to target children at risk of becoming disaffected can forestall the more intractable problems which could arise later.

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Children with high self-esteem who choose wisely and are in charge of their own learning are more likely to do well. This can lead to raised aspirations and increased motivation, and will therefore contribute to raising pupil achievement and school improvement. This will ultimately lead to economic benefits when young people complete their courses successfully and enter the labour market with higher skills and qualifications. Career-related learning is a social and economic investment.

A FRAMEWORK OF OUTCOMES

The following table is based on a draft framework of learning outcomes produced for consultation purposes by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The outcomes relate to three main purposes of careers education and guidance:

- **self-development** – to help children to understand and develop themselves
- **career exploration** – to help children to find out about the choices they can have
- **career management** – to help children make decisions and carry out their plans

By the end of Key Stage 1	By the end of Key Stage 2
Self-development	
Pupils: ■ recognise and take pride in their achievements ■ develop confidence in their own abilities ■ develop communication skills – listen to others and respond appropriately ■ are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and can share fairly ■ express personal preferences and identify a personal goal or target for improvement ■ develop skills to work in a group or alone to complete a task satisfactorily ■ value themselves and see worth in others	Pupils: ■ have a developing sense of their own strengths and weaknesses ■ are able to identify what they are good at and what skills they need to develop ■ are able to co-operate with each other and work in a team ■ talk and listen to adults-other-than-teachers in a variety of situations ■ recognise and use opportunities when they arise
Career exploration	
Pupils: ■ understand that adults take on different roles ■ investigate traditional and non-traditional roles in the home and school ■ are aware of a variety of occupations ■ through simulation, role-play and visits, imagine doing different jobs ■ gain increasing independence and are increasingly able to cope with change	Pupils: ■ show a growing awareness of the world of work ■ have knowledge of a wide range of occupations and how these may change over time ■ begin to develop concepts and a vocabulary to describe ideas about work ■ are aware of the importance of health and safety ■ understand what is meant by stereotypes ■ are developing broad horizons about the world of work
Career management	
Pupils: ■ ask for help when they need it ■ organise, plan and record work which the teacher has asked them to do ■ demonstrate independence in choosing an activity or resource ■ manage their own physical needs ■ behave appropriately in front of others ■ adjust to new situations with ease	Pupils: ■ draw on the help and support available to them ■ make simple action plans and carry them through to completion ■ show self-reliance in finishing work ■ make reasoned decisions and choices based on information they have gathered ■ understand what is meant by transition and can cope with preparing for and making changes

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CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DESIGN

"It's not about doing different things, it's about doing the same things a bit differently."

The key issues for curriculum planning and design are:

1 The concept of career-related learning

"Career-related learning is not careers education, nor even pre-careers education. It is helping children to link learning to life."

Career-related learning could be represented in the curriculum as:

- A core value: continually present, a permanent orientation, a commitment to helping children to move on and make progress in their lives.
- A process: teaching and support activities designed to promote the career learning and development of children.
- A resource or context: a means of illuminating other learning and bringing relevance to children's work and activity.
- An activity or event: e.g. a role-play or simulation.

To an extent it is or can be all of these; and its content and processes can be related quickly and easily to the overall purposes of education. In primary schools, it is essential that career-related learning is a clearly identifiable but integrated element of the curriculum – in other words, it exemplifies 'joined-up learning'. This means helping teachers to see that career-related learning is not a new imposition or bolted-on extra, but in most cases is a natural extension to what they are already doing.

It is helpful to locate career-related learning within a broad 'learning for living' agenda. Primary schools will recognise the clear links to elements of personal, social and health education, citizenship, environmental education and work-related learning.

2 Teaching and learning approaches

The teaching and learning approaches which are best-suited to career-related learning include:

- Processes which encourage children to plan and set targets for their own learning, to record their experiences and achievements, and to review and reflect upon them (e.g. personal portfolio, record of achievement);
- Processes which encourage children to use research skills, e.g. reading about jobs, interviewing people about their work, using ICT to create and manipulate information about themselves and the world of work, topic or project work;
- Processes which give children rich experiences and insights into what people do in their working lives, e.g. role-play;
- co-operative learning, e.g. circle time;
- skills development processes, e.g. coaching.

3 Progression in career-related learning

Coherence, continuity and progression are the main principles which need to be applied to career-related learning across all phases from pre-school to adult education. The activities planned to support transition on either side of the infant/junior and primary/secondary divide are particularly important.

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Developing provision

Schools need to consider:

- The supporting factors – what can be done to maximise these?
- The restraining factors – what can be done to minimise these?

Training and staff development

Areas for training and staff development include the need to:

- raise teachers' awareness of labour market and future of work information and how it can be used to benefit children;
- develop practical strategies for tackling equal-opportunities issues in career-related learning;
- identify resources and contacts for developing this work – from using governors and parents as a resource, to forging closer links and partnerships with local businesses, secondary schools and careers service companies;
- develop an organising frame for this work that will ensure progression across all key stages.

AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

The table below shows the main strategies and actions which could be used to develop career-related learning in the primary school at three levels: the school, locally and nationally. Mutually-supportive actions are needed at all three levels for progress to be made. Early strategies and actions are shown at the top of the table while those at the bottom of the table are those required to ensure that children are benefiting directly from career-related learning.

Actions ▶ Strategies ▼	Schools	Local agencies in support of schools	National agencies in support of local agencies and schools
Enable	■ Write a policy on career-related learning. ■ Include in school development plan.	■ Include career-related learning in LEA Educational Development Plan.	■ Include career-related learning in QCA's statement of aims for the curriculum. ■ Include career-related learning in the revised National Curriculum.
Inform and interest	■ Raise staff awareness of the benefits of career-related learning for children. ■ Show staff how career-related learning is linked to teacher effectiveness. ■ Explain the benefits to parents.	■ Local partners, including LEAs, TECs, EBPs and careers services, raise awareness and showcase good practice.	■ Communicate with schools about career-related learning through DfEE consultation events, publications, and initiatives such as the National Grid for Learning.
Prepare	■ Plan how career-related learning can be embedded in what the school is already doing, e.g. Literacy Hour. ■ Identify worthwhile learning outcomes and the opportunities which will contribute to their achievement.	■ Plan local development projects, with support from Government Offices.	■ Embed career-related learning in DfEE initiatives such as the National Numeracy Strategy.
Advise and support	■ Provide and develop teaching materials. ■ Meet training needs.	■ Identify and commit resources. ■ Provide training using appropriate models, e.g. teacher placements, cascade INSET, action research, networking and support groups.	■ Provide opportunities through funding staff development, e.g. through careers service companies and the Standards Fund. ■ TTA to include career-related learning in initial teacher training.
Implement	■ Make explicit the career-related learning in existing activities. ■ Arrange activities and experiences which will benefit children directly, e.g. portfolio and profiling activities.		
Audit and evaluate	■ Review and evaluate provision in school.	■ Review and evaluate provision in local area.	■ Survey of quality of existing provision by Ofsted/DfEE.

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority should recognise the importance of career-related learning in its current revision of the National Curriculum; and should use this Briefing to inform the work of the various advisory groups, including the Careers Advisory Group.

2 The Careers and Information Division of the DfEE should co-ordinate career-related learning initiatives and seek to involve other directorates and divisions of the DfEE in supporting this work. The CID as part of its agenda to tackle disaffection by focusing the work of the Careers Service should give due priority to career-related learning in the primary school as an early intervention strategy for those children most at risk. Schools would welcome a publication on career-related learning, perhaps in the *Better Choices* series, to help them get started. Local partners would welcome regional consultations to help them plan a strategic response to developing career-related learning. This issue should be raised as part of governor training and awareness. The potential of the National Grid for Learning to aid dissemination should be explored.

3 The DfEE should identify career-related learning, possibly linked to a wider agenda of 'learning for living' or 'teacher effectiveness', as a priority area for in-service training within the Standards Fund.

4 The Redefining Work project at the RSA should specifically address issues of career-related learning in primary schools in the next stage of its work.

5 The Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality should provide advice and guidance on the representation and treatment of individuals and groups for producers and publishers of career-related learning materials.

6 The Teacher Training Agency should incorporate career-related learning in the curriculum for initial teacher training.

7 Ofsted should undertake a national survey of career-related learning in the primary school and should incorporate career-related learning in the next revision of the inspection framework for primary schools.

8 Organisations and associations with an interest in the 'learning for living' agenda should seek to extend their professional dialogue and collaboration with each other. They should recognise the importance of involving primary school headteachers as managers of career-related learning, as well as practitioners and advisory and support staff.

9 Centres of careers research in higher education should undertake research and development to find out more about the nature of children's career-related learning and its possible social benefits.

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